

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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SUBJECT: LETTER FROM CONCERNED AMERICAN MISSIONARIES TO
PRESIDENT FORD

REF: SEOUL 7186

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF LETTER TO PRESIDENT FORD AS MENTIONED
IN REFTEL SIGNED BY 63 AMERICAN MISSIONARIES IN KOREA.

QUOTE: THE SIGNERS OF THIS LETTER ARE ALL MEN AND WOMEN
WHO ARE LIVING AND SERVING IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA. OUT OF
OUR DEEP CONCERN FOR THE WELFARE AND DEVELOPMENT OF KOREA
AND ITS PEOPLE, WE WISH TO BRING TO YOUR ATTENTION THE CRITICAL
SITUATION NOW EXISTING IN THIS NATION.

WE ARE SURE THAT YOU ARE AWARE OF THE IMPRISONMENT OF SCORES
OF STUDENTS, CHRISTIAN CLERGYMEN, SOCIAL LEADERS, LAWYERS
AND COMMON CITIZENS. THESE MEN AND WOMEN HAVE BEEN ARRESTED
ON FALSE POLITICAL CHARGES. THE MILITARY COURTS THAT HAVE
TRIED THEM HAVE PROSTITUTED EVEN MILITARY COURT STANDARDS,
LET ALONE STANDARDS OF NORMAL CIVIL PROCEDURES. SENTENCES
OF SEVERAL YEARS TO DEATH HAVE BEEN HANDED DOWN DESPITE ABSENCE
OF EVIDENCE. EIGHT MEN ARE TO DIE FOR THEIR PART IN A SO-CALLED
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CONSPIRACY WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO PROVE

EVER EXISTED.

IN ADDITION TO THESE DRAMATIC VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, COUNTLESS CITIZENS ARE UNDER THE RUTHLESS SURVEILLANCE OF THE KOREAN CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY; PROFESSORS AT UNIVERSITIES ARE EXAMINED LEST THEY HAVE "DISLOYAL" IDEAS; BUSINESSMEN ARE UNDER CONSTANT POLICE PRESSURE TO MAKE POLITICAL "CONTRIBUTIONS"; WORKERS HAVE HAD THEIR RIGHTS TO COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND COLLECTIVE ACTION TAKEN AWAY; AND ORDINARY CITIZENS IN THE MARKETS, TEA ROOMS AND OTHER PUBLIC PLACES MUST CAREFULLY GUARD THEIR SPEECH LEST THEY BE OVERHEARD TO OFFEND THE GOVERNMENT IN SOME MANNER.

THESE CRIMES AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES ARE, HOWEVER, ONLY THE BY-PRODUCT OF A MORE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM; THAT BEING THE "YUSHIN" CONSTITUTION ("REVITALIZING REFORMS"). THIS CONSTITUTION, FORCEFULLY PRESSED UPON THE KOREAN PEOPLE UNDER A DECREE OF MARTIAL LAW IN OCTOBER OF 1972, ELIMINATED DEMOCRATIC LEGISLATIVE GOVERNMENT IN KOREA; MADE ONE MAN, PARK CHUNG HEE, VIRTUAL DICTATOR FOR LIFE; AND ALLOWED MR. PARK AND HIS CIA TO SUSPEND ANY PERSON OR GROUP OF THEIR CIVIL LIBERTIES AT ANY TIME. THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF 1974 ARE A CONSEQUENCE OF THIS YUSHIN CONSTITUTION. THEREFORE LARGE NUMBERS OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE ARE DEMANDING THAT THE YUSHIN CONSTITUTION BE WITHDRAWN AND THE DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION WHICH EXISTED UP TO 1972 BE REINSTATED. THIS IS A JUST DEMAND WHICH MUST BE RECOGNIZED IF KOREA IS TO RETURN TO THE PATH OF DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT.

SOME RATIONALIZE THAT THE YUSHIN CONSTITUTION AND THE SUPPRESSION PRACTICED BY PARK AND HIS CIA ARE NECESSARY IN ORDER TO DEFEND THE COUNTRY AGAINST A THREATENED INVASION FROM NORTH KOREA. IN FACT, HOWEVER, THE OBSERVABLE RESULTS ARE THE EXACT OPPOSITE. SOUTH KOREA IS SO FILLED WITH MISTRUST AND FEAR ARISING FROM PARK'S CONSTITUTION AND THE RESULTANT POLICIES, THAT THE SOCIAL UNITY NEEDED TO DEFEND AGAINST THE NORTH HAS CERTAINLY BEEN WEAKENED. MODERNIZATION OF KOREA'S MILITARY CANNOT RESTORE THE CONFIDENCE OF THE CITIZENS IN THEIR GOVERNMENT. PARK'S GOVERNMENT HAS UNDERMINED ITS OWN MILITARY FORCES AS WELL AS THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES WHICH JUST RECENTLY

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HAVE AGAIN BEEN PLEDGED TO DEFEND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA.

HOW WILL THE REST OF THE WORLD REACT TO AMERICA'S CONTINUING SUPPORT OF PARK'S DICTATORIAL POLICIES? THE RECENT CONGRESSIONAL HEARINGS HAVE CLEARLY POINTED OUT NOT ONLY A SHIFT IN U.S. PUBLIC OPINION, BUT ALSO THE GRAVE DISADVANTAGES OF THE U.S. CONTINUING ITS UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT OF THE PARK REGIME. WE TOO ARE OF THE STRONG OPINION THAT IT WOULD BE IN THE BEST

INTEREST OF BOTH KOREA AND THE US -- DIPLOMATICALLY, ECONOMICALLY, AND MILITARILY -- TO CONVEY STRONG DISAPPROVAL OF THE TREND OF EVENTS IN THIS COUNTRY OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS. WE FEEL THAT YOUR VISIT, IF IT DOES NOT INCLUDE THIS EXPRESSION OF DISAPPROVAL, WILL ONLY PROVE TO MILLIONS OF OBSERVERS THAT THE US GOVERNMENT DOES, IN FACT, FULLY SUPPORT THE OPPRESSIVE POLICIES OF THE PRESENT KOREAN GOVERNMENT.

MR. PRESIDENT, WE ARE WRITING THIS LETTER OUT OF LOVE AND COMMITMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF KOREA. WE WISH YOU TO BE FULLY INFORMED OF THESE FACTS WHEN YOU MAKE YOUR VISIT HERE IN NOVEMBER. ALREADY KOREAN NEWSPAPERS HAVE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS LIKELY TO RELEASE SOME POLITICAL PRISONERS BEFORE YOUR VISIT. OF COURSE, IF THIS OCCURS, WE, ALONG WITH THE PEOPLE OF KOREA, WILL REJOICE AT SUCH A MOVE. HOWEVER, AT THE SAME TIME WE MUST RECOGNIZE THIS ACT FOR WHAT IT IS: ONLY A GESTURE TO IMPRESS THE WORLD AND PARTICULARLY THE UNITED STATES. WE WOULD MOURN THE FACT THAT IT WAS DONE WITH SUCH MOTIVATION RATHER THAN AS A GENUINE ATTEMPT TO RESTORE THE INTEGRITY OF THIS NATION.

IN LIGHT OF THESE FACTS WE ASK THAT YOU STRONGLY URGE THE LEADERS OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO RELEASE ALL THE POLITICAL PRISONERS APPREHENDED SINCE OCTOBER, 1972; TO RESCIND THE REMAINING EMERGENCY MEASURES; AND TO ABOLISH THE YUSHIN CONSTITUTION, REINSTATING IN ITS PLACE THE DEMOCRATIC CONSTITUTION WHICH EXISTED UP TO OCTOBER, 1972. WE ALSO STRONGLY SUGGEST THAT YOU MEET WITH OPPOSITION RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, AND POLITICAL LEADERS.

WE, THE SIGNERS, REPRESENTING VARIOUS CHURCHES, AGENCIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS, WILL BE GLAD TO MEET WITH YOU OR ANY OF YOUR ACCOMPANYING PARTY TO DISCUSS THESE MATTERS DIRECTLY. WE

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PRAY THAT YOUR VISIT WILL HAVE SOME INFLUENCE IN HEALING THE PRESENT TRAGIC SITUATION. UNQUOTE.
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